

# Islam and Western liberal democracy are incompatible

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## ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

Ali: Islam has certain characteristics that can co-exist with Western democracy. As a Muslim, I was taught to be generous, to be hospitable, to be kind to the elderly and to be kind to the poor. But the basic tenets of Islam and the basic tenets of Western liberal democracies are incompatible.

Islam fails to recognise secularity or the separation of church and state. Women are subordinate. Life is not valued as much as in the Western liberal societies, where life and the freedom of the individual are separate ends in themselves. In Islam, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are things that you can pursue when you go to heaven, but you have to die first because life on earth is just a passage and you observe certain rules, and if you don't observe those rules you're not considered a Muslim.

Ali: Precisely, and that's why in this debate I think we should make a distinction between Muslims and Islam. Muslims are individuals and they are varied. Islam as a doctrine, as a body of ideas, as a belief, means submission to the will of Allah ... You will find that some accept democracy and appreciate it, some who do not, and you will find others who are out to destroy it. I think we should not underestimate those.

## FULL TEXT

Somali migrant and former Dutch MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali, with Kerry O'Brien on ABC's The 7.30 Report on Friday

O'BRIEN: Is it fair to draw the conclusion from your books and from your articles that you don't believe that Islam and Western- style democracy can co-exist?

Ali: Islam has certain characteristics that can co-exist with Western democracy. As a Muslim, I was taught to be generous, to be hospitable, to be kind to the elderly and to be kind to the poor. But the basic tenets of Islam and the basic tenets of Western liberal democracies are incompatible.

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And then you have the treatment of homosexuals, or at least the idea that they are not allowed to live and should either be banished or killed. Now, in liberal societies these are values that are radically different from what Islam preaches.

O'Brien: But there are many, many moderate Muslims in Australia and I imagine England, The Netherlands and

other Western-style democracies who would say they have no absolute problem practising their religion faithfully but also supporting the democratic system of their country.

Ali: Precisely, and that's why in this debate I think we should make a distinction between Muslims and Islam. Muslims are individuals and they are varied. Islam as a doctrine, as a body of ideas, as a belief, means submission to the will of Allah ... You will find that some accept democracy and appreciate it, some who do not, and you will find others who are out to destroy it. I think we should not underestimate those.

Federal minister Tony Abbott, after his religious political address at the Young Liberals federal convention on Saturday:

QUESTION: Are you surprised that [Kevin Rudd] doesn't want to make a comment about what you're saying [accusing Rudd of trying to shame Christians into voting Labor]?

Abbott: Well, I'm a little surprised that for the first time in his life Kevin seems to have taken a vow of silence. I guess there's a certain religious precedence for taking a vow of silence, but it's quite unusual for a politician like Kevin ...

Question: His minders are saying that he doesn't want to have a public argument about something that he is quite clear on, his stance on Christianity.

Abbott: He was perfectly happy to publish a 5000-word essay in The Monthly in October. He was perfectly happy to debate these issues on [the ABC's] Lateline. At the time, he was perfectly happy to debate me on Radio National. In the November issue of The Monthly, he followed up with another attack – which he suggested was motivated in part by Christianity – on the Howard Government. So if he's going to raise these issues, he can't run away from public debate.

Question: Do you think his advisers are telling him to tread softly, softly and that it may be starting to be counterproductive?

Abbott: Well, there are enormous tensions inside the Labor Party on this whole question of faith in politics. Thirty of 60 Labor members of the House of Representatives at the 2004 swearing-in took an affirmation rather than swear an oath on the Bible ... So there are a lot of people in the ALP who are very uncomfortable with Kevin's religiosity.

Charles Krauthammer, in The Washington Post, on how to combat global warming:

NO one has a remotely good idea about how to make any difference in global warming without enlisting China and India and without destroying the carbon-based Western economy. The obvious first step, however, is an extremely powerful source of energy that produces not an ounce of carbon dioxide: nuclear.

What about nuclear waste? Well, coal produces toxic pollutants, as does oil. Both produce carbon dioxide that we are told is going to end civilisation as we know it. These wastes are widely dispersed and almost impossible to recover once they get thrown into the atmosphere. Nukes produce waste as well, but it comes out concentrated, very toxic and lasting nearly forever, but because it is packed into a small, manageable volume, it is more controllable. And it doesn't pollute the atmosphere. At all. There is no free lunch. Producing energy is going to produce waste. You pick your poison and you find a way to manage it. Want to do something about global

warming? How many global-warming activists are willing to say the word nuclear?

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